

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Response to Claim Objection

In the Office Action the Examiner rejected claim 4 as a multiple dependent claim. In response claim 4 has been amended to depend only from claim 1.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

In the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, and 5 under 35 USC 102 (e) as being anticipated by Lashinski et al (US Patent 6,071,296). The Lashinski patent, however, does not describe or suggest a second end ring segment having a continuous circumferential section, as required by the amended claims, which is radially thicker than at an intermediate location. The Lashinski patent discloses a stent having a distal end portion with a thick portion which is non-continuous (Figure 5A and Figure 6).

The examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6 and 7 under 102 (e) as being anticipated by Alt (US Patent 5,824, 045). The Alt et al patent, however, does not describe or suggest a second end ring segment having a continuous circumferential section with a radial thickness greater than the continuous ring of an intermediate ring segment. Amended claim 1 and new claim 8 are directed to a prosthesis having a continuous circumferential section surrounding the second end ring segment which is not taught by the Alt patent, therefore these claims should be allowable. All subsequent claims depend on claim 8 and should likewise be allowable.

Support for the amendment to claim 1 and new claims 8-13 can generally be found throughout the specification and particularly on page 22 lines 22-34 and page 23 lines 1-2 and Figures 1, 2, 11, and 13 when taken in conjunction with Figure 22A.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 09/687,606
Amdt. dated January 14, 2004
Reply to Office Action of July 25, 2003

PATENT

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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